WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A network device, comprising:

   an input port to receive input data;

   a transmission port to transmit data at a transmission rate;

   a detector to detect real-time input data;

   a controller to set the maximum transmission rate equal to the first traffic rate
   when the detector detects real-time input data.

2. The network device of claim 1, wherein the network device includes a timer to track occurrences of real-time input data.

3. The network device of claim 2, wherein the controller increases the traffic rate above the first traffic rate when the timer expires.

4. The network device of claim 1, wherein the maximum transmission rate is between the first traffic rate and a second traffic rate.

5. The network device of claim 1, wherein the real-time input data is voice data.

6. The network device of claim 1, wherein the real-time input data is video data.

7. The network device of claim 1, wherein the detector detects a characteristic of the input data to identify the input data as real-time input data.

8. The network device of claim 1, wherein the detector detects real-time input data by determining a source address.

9. The network device of claim 1, wherein the detector detects real-time input data by determining a source port.

10. A network device, comprising:

    means for detecting real-time traffic; and

    means for reducing a maximum transmission rate to a first traffic rate in response
    to the real-time data.

11. The network device of claim 10, wherein the network device further comprises a means for detecting a cessation of real-time traffic and a means for allowing the maximum transmission rate to exceed the first traffic rate.

8

12. The network device of claim 10, wherein the means for detecting further comprises a detector module.

13. The network device of claim 10, wherein the means for reducing a maximum transmission rate further comprises a controller.

14. The network device of claim 10, wherein the means for detecting and the means for reducing a maximum transmission rate are included in one component.

15. A method, comprising:

    detecting real-time traffic in a network device; and

    reducing a maximum transmission rate to a first traffic rate in response to the
        real-time traffic.

16. The method of claim 15, wherein the method further comprises detecting a cessation of real-time traffic and allowing the maximum transmission rate to exceed the first traffic rate.

17. The method of claim 15, wherein detecting a cessation of real-time traffic further comprises monitoring a timer for expiration, wherein the timer is reset upon each occurrence of real-time data.

18. The method of claim 15, wherein detecting real-time traffic further comprises examining data as it passes through a network device.

19. The method of claim 18, wherein the data further comprises packets.

20. The method of claim 15, wherein detecting real-time traffic further comprises monitoring a port electrically coupled to a source of real-time data.

21. The method of claim 15, wherein detecting real-time traffic further comprises reception of a resource request.

22. An article containing machine readable code that, when executed, causes the machine to:

    detect real-time traffic; and

    reduce a maximum transmission rate to a first rate in response to the real-time
        traffic.

9

23. The article of claim 22, wherein the code further comprises code that, when executed, causes the machine to:

detect a cessation of the real-time traffic; and

allow the maximum transmission rate to exceed the first traffic rate.

24. The article of claim 22, wherein the code, when executed, causing the machine to detect a cessation of real-time traffic further causes the machine to monitor a time for expiration, wherein the time is reset upon each occurrence of real-time data.

25. A method, the method comprising:

monitoring a port electrically coupled to a real-time source for data from the source; and

reducing a maximum transmission rate to a first traffic rate prior to real-time data being transmitted from the source.

26. The method of claim 25, wherein the real-time source is a voice source.

27. The method of claim 26, wherein the real-time source is a video source.

28. The method of claim 25, wherein reducing a maximum transmission rate further comprises:

receiving a signal from the real-time source that data from that source is going to be transmitted.

29. The method of claim 25, wherein the method further comprises allowing the maximum transmission rate to exceed the first traffic rate upon cessation of the real-time data being transmitted from the source.

30. The method of claim 29, wherein the method further comprises receiving a signal from a source indicating that the real-time source has ceased transmission of the real-time data.

31. A method, the method comprising:

receiving a resource reservation request for real-time data to be transmitted along a path in a network;

reducing a maximum transmission rate to a first traffic rate.

32. The method of claim 31, wherein the method further comprises:

receiving a resource release upon the cessation of real-time data being transmitted along the path; and

allowing the maximum transmission rate to exceed the first traffic rate.

33. The method of claim 31, wherein the first traffic rate is provided in the resource reservation request.

34. The method of claim 31, wherein the first traffic rate is predetermined.